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THE
C R I T I C;
OR A
TRAGEDY REHEARSED:
A NEW
D R A M A T I C P I E C E
I N
T H R E E A C T S;
AS IT IS PERFORMED BY
HIS MAJESTY'S SERVANTS,
WITH THE
G R E A T E S T A P P L A U S E.

BY THE AUTHOR OF THE DUENNA.

L O N D O N:
Printed for S. B L A D O N, No. 13, Pater-noster-Row.
M D C C L X X X.

[Price One Shilling and Six-pence.]



PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS.

DANGLE,	Mr. <i>Minden.</i>
SNEER,	Mr. <i>Todd.</i>
PUFF,	Mr. <i>Boreas.</i>
SIR WALTER RALEIGH,	Mr. <i>Twitcher.</i>
SIR CHRISTOPHER HATTON,	Mr. <i>Bullface.</i>
WISKERANOS,	Mr. <i>Kew.</i>
RATTLE,	Mr. <i>Thomas Teller.</i>
ORATOR,	Mr. <i>St. Omers.</i>
BULLY,	Captain <i>Grumble.</i>
PETITIONER,	Mr. <i>Gordon.</i>
CONTRACT,	Mr. <i>Regiment.</i>
SCRIBBLE,	Mr. <i>Priest.</i>
 TILBURINA,	 Mrs. <i>Dangle.</i>

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY

[illegible]

T H E
C R I T I C.

A C T I. S C E N E I.

DANGLE, Mrs. DANGLE.

Dangle. **D**ON'T interrupt me, Mrs. Dangle: this news from America is the most extraordinary that ever reached the British shore. I must read the dispatches.—Hum! hum!—Savannah—Prevost—D'Estaing—

Mrs. Dangle. By the way, Mr. Dangle, d'Estaing is as great a rascal as ———

Dangle. No reflections, Madam, no reflections.—If the first of August, 1759, could be obliterated, I might stand a chance of appearing in a light not wholly contemptible.---This Gazette ———

Mrs. Dangle. I wish, Sir, the Gazette had told the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but ———

B

Dangle.

Dangle. Pshaw ! Mrs. Dangle---the building of a Gazette is like the building of a bridge or an hospital---we do it *by contract*, and are paid *in the lump*.

Mrs. *Dangle.* Yes, yes, Sir, you lump it no doubt ; but if the real dispatches were printed as you receive them, do you imagine the Tower guns would be fired on the news ?

Dangle. The guns, Madam, are fired before the event is otherwise announced ; and if they give false intelligence, place it to the account of Wiskeranos.

Mrs. *Dangle.* His account ! he gives no orders——

Dangle. Indeed but he does, and——

Mrs. *Dangle.* Lord help him, poor fellow ! he wastes all his time in stag-hunting and reviewing. Little does he know how much he is abused by his servants. He is the honestest fellow, with the most impenetrable head in the universe.

Dangle. Impenetrable enough, heaven knows ; and yet I can assure you, that the first lord of the admiralty has ordered it to be sheathed with copper.

Mrs. *Dangle.* Ha ! ha ! ha ! sheathed with copper ! they may sheath it, but nothing can prevent its being worm-eaten, while you and your associates have an opportunity of whispering in its ear.

Dangle. No reflections, once more ; no reflections, Mrs. *Dangle.*—We do not whisper ; we speak out, to the hearing of all the world.

Mrs.

Mrs. *Dangle*. Aye, and to its *feelings* too. More hard blows have been given since you have been in office, than were ever given in Germany, even during the squabble for that electorate, of which so much has been said to so little purpose.

Dangle. Pshaw ! Madam ! you refer to the foolish days of George the Second, when that Pitt was in office—when men spoke their minds, and it was fashionable to tell the truth.—Ah ! Lord help me ! If that man had never existed——

Mrs. *Dangle*. Then your name had never been crossed out of the list of privy counsellors.

Dangle. Again ! Mrs. *Dangle* !—but no more—Wiskeranos comes this way, and I must attend his orders.

Mrs. *Dangle*. *Disobey* them, you mean—would to God you had obeyed those of his grandfather.—It is from Puff that you receive your orders, and he receives them.——

Dangle. From the devil you mean—but no more of your sneers, Madam : orders received from Wiskeranos, or Puff, mean the same thing——

Mrs. *Dangle*. That is, they mean nothing---

Dangle. Silence, I say---they are in company ; and the fate of empires may await the issue of the present moment——

4 THE CRITIC.

SCENE II.

Enter Wiskeranos and Puff.

Wisk. Perdition catch my soul, but I do love her !

Dangle. Congratulations to your worship--- Who is it that you are so much in love with ?

Wisk. Faith I can hardly tell---Tilburina, I think they call her---

Dangle. Tilburina ! What the dirty drab that lives opposite the church at Gravesend--- Ràleigh's commode ?

Puff. The very same, Mr. Dangle---Whiskeranos is distractedly fond of any thing that is recommended by that old lecher.

Wisk. No more of that ; but she is a fine figure, and has the whole history of the great naval review by heart.

Puff. True, Sir, but she knows nothing of the reviews at Wimbledon and Black-Heath, and is a perfect stranger to the manœuvres of Warley-common---

Wisk. No matter---I shall instruct her in those things during my summer progress---but let us change the subject : I am told that Mr. Sneer is making formidable head against you, and will be more than your match in a certain assembly---

Puff. Upon my honour, Sir, I despise both him and his attempts---

Wisk.

Wisk. That I can scarcely believe---for you cannot despise his abilities; and abilities such as his, if they were combined with equal virtues——

Puff. Might unhinge an empire: but no man in power can fear a gambler——

Dangle. Except he be a greater gambler himself.

Puff. Why, you do not mean to insinuate that I am a gambler——

Dangle. Yes, the greatest in the universe: ---you play for millions, and not a shilling of the money your own.

Puff. And yet, Sir, I play a successful game, and never revoke.

Dangle. I know not what you call a successful game; but if to lose in every deal; to squander year after year the revenue of a principality; to receive immense sums and give no account of them; to defraud all those who are foolish enough to trust you with their money, by promising to settle with them twenty years after their grand-children are dead, are proofs of success, you are the most fortunate gambler in the universe.

Wisk. No quarrelling, gentlemen: you two, and Sir Walter Raleigh, are the men on whom I depend for the faithful management of all my affairs; and if you disagree, it will be impossible but I must be a loser, and you will be ultimately ruined.

Dangle. Ruined, Sir! That we are already—
We

We have disgraced ourselves, and lost our characters, by engaging in your service.

Puff. Pardon me, Signor Wiskeranos, but I cannot help smiling at a man's talking of loss of character, who has had none to lose for above twenty years past.

Dangle. You lie, you rascal; you ——

Mrs. Dangle. Nay, now it is time for a woman to interfere.—Signor Wiskeranos, I beg your attention. These servants of your's, to my knowledge, are combined to rob you of your property and your honour. They have abetted you in the prosecution of a law-suit with your best tenants, who would willingly have paid their rents, and sent you large annual presents besides; but that the interference of my sweet spouse, and his friend Puff, has deprived them of the opportunity of being just, even where they wished to prove themselves generous.

Wisk. There may be some truth in this--- but I don't understand it.

Mrs. Dangle. Understand it, Sir!---Why, every man in the kingdom sees it except yourself.---Is black, white? No. Do two and two make four? Yes.---Equally clear is it, that tenants who are unreasonably oppressed, (and all oppression is unreasonable) must be unable to pay their rents. What is the consequence? The landlord is a sufferer, and the tenants are ruined, except, with a spirit almost peculiar to *your* tenants, they take the lands into their

OWN

own hands, call themselves proprietors, and cultivate, for their own use, those lands which they had hitherto held as the property of another.

Wisk. I am as ignorant as before---but here comes Sir Walter Raleigh, and perhaps he may develope the mystery——.

SCENE III.

Enter Sir Walter Raleigh.

Wisk. We have had a little debate, Sir Walter, and you are to be umpire. Is black white?

Raleigh. Yes, Sir.

Wisk. Do two and two make four?

Raleigh. No.

Wisk. Do you think in your conscience, that——

Puff. Conscience! ha! ha! ha! I'll be d——d if he has any more conscience than myself; and, I believe, if all things were settled, not quite as much.

Wisk. Silence, Mr. Puff, I was asking a plain question, to which I expected a plain answer. ---Do you, Sir Walter, think, in your conscience, that——

Omnes, except Wisk. Conscience! ha! ha! ha!

Wisk. There is no end to this impertinence; but once more I will ask the question I had intended.---Do you, Sir Walter, in your conscience,

science, think, that if my tenants are unwilling to pay their rents, that I can compel them?

Raleigh. No doubt of it, Sir.

Wisk. But suppose law, and reason, and justice, should be on their side?

Raleigh. D--- law, and reason, and justice, what have we to do with them?

Wisk. But suppose they should be stronger than myself?

Raleigh. What of that?---hire a set of ragga-muffins---Germans, Hessians, Brunswickers; no matter whom---pour in upon them the whole swarm of the northern hive---the modern Goths and Vandals---extirpate them at a blow.

Wisk. They may resist.

Raleigh. I would undertake, with five thousand men, to desolate their country.

Wisk. So you said before in another place; ---but it does not appear that we have been able to do it with a hundred and fifty thousand: the rogues are sturdy, and resist every force that I have been able to send against them: ---besides, I am afraid they are honest---

Raleigh. Nay, then I have done with them: ---I have no great conception what honesty means; but if there be such a thing, my machinations must be at an end.

Puff. Do, dear Sir, let me try to raise the supplies for another year, and I will be bound, by the help of lawyer Caen-wood, to reduce these rebellious tenants to obedience.

Wisk.

Wisk. Yes, yes, you will reduce them with a vengeance. If it had not been for Caenwood and yourself, and half a score such rascally advisers, I had not lost the friendship, and consequently the service, of thirteen of the best tenants that ever country gentleman could boast.

Puff. I have done, Sir——

Wisk. I wish you had finished your career seven years ago at Tyburn; I should not now have cause to lament the wretchedness of my situation. But a word with Raleigh.---Tell me truly, Sir Walter, do you think it possible to subjugate these rebellious tenants of mine?

Raleigh. Why, Sir, you said before that you were afraid they were honest. If your fears are well founded, it cannot be in the power of any of your present agents to do you service---for we are rascals to a man---there is not the shadow of honesty left among us. [Exeunt.

SCENE IV. *Downing-street.*

Puff.---To him enter Raleigh, Dangle, and Scribble.

Raleigh. What asleep, Sir! We have been up all night for the good of our country.

Puff. Asleep, Sir!---by no means---I was reading the Morning Post, which informs me, that---O! I beg pardon of your reverence---I had not the honour to see you, Mr. Scribble.

C

---Well,

---Well, what news from the North?---what say the petitioners?

Scribble. All over, Sir---I am afraid that nothing is to be done with people, the leading men among whom will not be bribed.

Puff. Then we shall have warm work in the house.---This cursed example will be followed.---Petitioning will become the fashion, and who knows how tragically this farce may end? ---What! had our friend Smelt's oratory no effect?

Scribble. O, yes, Sir, a great one.---The very effect that might have been expected.---Himself and his oratory were the objects of the public derision.---But I have taken care to abuse the petitioners for to-morrow's paper.

Puff. Thank ye, Mr. Scribble. I doubt not your talents at abuse; but I hope it will precede the encomiums in the other papers.

Scribble. I don't know, Sir;---that *Ledger*, and that *General Advertiser*, are apt to forestall us in every thing that the printers think may contribute to the public good.

Raleigh. Pardon me, Sir; will contribute to their own advantage, you mean; I cannot suppose, but that printers are as attentive to their own interest as other people; and you may all remember the time, when I prompted the profligate parson to abuse Wilkes in the very *Ledger* you are speaking of.

Dangle. O! Kidgell, you mean---Pray what is become of that scoundrel?

Scribble.

Scribble. Nay, no reflections, Mr. Dangle. If he was a scoundrel, what must——

Dangle. I know the inference, Mr. Dangle; but the case does not apply. You would ask, if he was a scoundrel, what must you be. He was the private tool of Raleigh, for the most dirty purposes;---you are the general, the public tool, of every man of infamous character, for any dirty purpose whatever. His character was bad enough to procure him a living of seven hundred *per annum*.---Your's, if you persist some months longer, may advance you to a deanry at least, if not to a bishopric.

Scribble. God grant I could see the time; I would then take up, and be honest.

Raleigh. Yes---honest, and be d---d t'ye---If you did not preach passive-obedience, non-resistance, and unconditional submission, we should find a means, in queen Elizabeth's phrase, to *unfrock ye*.

Scribble. Pray, Sir, be easy on that subject:---I would preach, as I have written---*anything*.

Puff. A truce to this nonsense, I beseech ye, gentlemen; we have been all rogues; but let us proceed to business. Do you think that the Middlesex petition will succeed that of Yorkshire?

Scribble. Indisputably---Byng, and the two Townshends are obstinate fellows, and it will not be easy to beat them: besides, Sir, I am afraid they have the voices of the people on their side.

Puff. D—— the people---Let me secure a majority in the house, and I shall care no more for the people than Walpole did——

Scribble. By the way, Sir, that Walpole was a devilish clever fellow.

Puff. You and your order have reason to think so, Mr. Scribble. I have heard of sixteen thousand pounds paid in one year, to authors, printers, and publishers.

Scribble. And Sir Walter could tell you of an equal sum at the least, that ought to be now paid, if he kept, or was able to keep, his word with his agents.---Heaven knows that the dirty work I did respecting the Portsmouth trial, has never been half paid for, and perhaps never may——

Raleigh. What do you mean, rascal?

Scribble. I mean, Sir, that such men as Kettel ought not to be abused, nor such as Palliser defended, for nothing.---The labourer is worthy of his hire,

Raleigh. His hire!---I paid you for that infamous business more than I received myself. Had not you fifty guineas weekly during the whole trial? Did I not, besides, pay all your travelling charges and other expences? Did I not likewise pay double the cost of the three post-horses that were killed in bringing the expresses? And exclusive of all this, did I not treat your dirty devils in Catherine-street, day and night, to assist in forwarding the business, that the eyes of the people might be blinded,
and

and that they might wish the destruction of the devoted admiral?

Scribble. All this may be very true; and yet I never received a twentieth part of what I deserved;---no man ought to damn himself for a trifle; and least of all one of my cloth.

Omnes. The cloth! An excellent jest, faith!

Raleigh. Suppose we pay a proper attention to the merits of Mr. Scribble, and let him be thought of in the next list of presentations. I have a vacant living in my eye, that would just suit him.

Puff. Pshaw, Raleigh, you are joking---Scribble makes more money already, than he could do by farther advancement in the church, and in a way more agreeable to his own inclinations. If he was promoted to a higher rank in his line, he could not decently fight duels: a cut-throat parson is but a queer kind of a character.---But once more, a truce to this nonsense, and let us proceed to business.

Dangle. With all my heart, and the sooner the better; for I hate to hear of fighting.

Puff. I was asking Mr. Scribble, if he thought the Middlesex petition would succeed that of Yorkshire.

Scribble. I answered in the affirmative; and I am afraid that the fire being once kindled, the flame will spread through the kingdom.

Puff. Why, I am told that petitions are expected from London, Westminster, Surry, Hertfordshire, Suffex, Kent, Buckinghamshire, Gloucestershire, Cheshire, and ---

Scribble.

Scribble. Yes, Sir, and if my information says true, from Dorsetshire, Devonshire, Essex, Berkshire, Nottingham, Newcastle, and a variety of other counties, towns, and cities.

Puff. Then I may soon say

“A long farewell to all my boasted greatness;” for these petitions will be backed in the house, by all the sons of noise, uproar and sedition:---but I must wish you a good morning, Gentlemen, for I expect Wiskeranos every moment, and it would not be proper that he should find us together.

Scribble. Wiskeranos!---Why, I should have rather thought it your duty to have waited on him——

Puff. Ceremony must give way to business, and these are not times to stand on trifles.---Neither you nor I are very nice:---but you will excuse me---good morning t’ye; I have only one word to say to Raleigh and Dangle, and they shall follow you.

Scribble. Your worship’s most devoted---

[*Exit Scribble.*

Puff. ’Tis a precious rogue, this priest, but we must be cautious how we trust him.

Raleigh. I think so---for he will reveal all he knows to any person who will pay him a better price than ourselves.

Dangle. I am not quite of that opinion; I believe the rogue has some kind of principle, and that he had rather do mischief than good.

Puff.

Puff. Or else he would not be fit for our purpose : but adieu, Gentlemen ; though I told Scribble that I expected Wiskeranos, you knew better.---The fact is, that I expect some citizens, with whom I am to settle the terms of the new loan.

Raleigh. And I must go and read the dispatches from Rodney : I wish to heaven Palliser had been on that station ; we might have recovered our characters.

Dangle. He might possibly have recovered his ; but your's, like mine, is lost beyond redemption.---Good morning to your worship.

Puff. Gentlemen, your most obedient humble servant---I hope the honour of seeing you on Wednesday.

[*Exeunt Raleigh and Dangle.*]

SCENE V.

—Now there goes two of the most infamous scoundrels in the universe. The one a bad husband, a bad father, a letcher of seventy, a merry Andrew, a mere buffoon ; with a tolerable head, and the worst heart in the universe : ---the other a savage in mind and in manner, ---base of heart himself, and of course incapable of thinking generously of another : a knave ---a poltroon---a coward---I wonder how Wiskeranos could ever think of employing such a servant---his noble ancestor would have disdained the idea——

SCENE

SCENE VI.

Re-enter Dangle.

Ha! my dear Sir, to what fortunate circumstance am I indebted for your so sudden return?

Dangle. Nay---don't be alarmed---but Raleigh being engaged in reading dispatches, has begged I would just inform you, that an important motion is to be made in the lower house to-day; that Irish fellow, Mr. Orator they call him, is to give notice, that he intends a general plan of reform; and Raleigh joins with me in thinking, that if he should prevail on the country gentlemen to be of his opinion, he may carry his point, and then we shall be all utterly ruined.

Puff. Make yourself easy---I have heard of this business from at least a dozen quarters already:---with regard to our being ruined, that is impossible; we are already utterly lost in the public opinion, and I do not see how it is possible that we should sink much lower.

Dangle. *Nil desperandum*, Sir;---that is my motto.---If I had despaired, I should have hanged myself twenty years ago.---Adieu---

[*Exit.*

Puff. And if you had, it had been a public blessing---but now for my citizens---

Enter

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Sir, Mr. *Contract*, the army clothier, waits your leisure.

Puff. Shew him in immediately.

Enter Contract.

Well, my dear Sir, what say our friends in the city? Do they accept of the terms of the loan?

Contract. No, Sir, they say it is but a bare *ten per cent.* and they expect twelve and a half.

Puff. Unconscionable dogs!---Who have you without?

Contract. Not a man. They referred the present business to me, saying, it was their *ultimatum*, and that if you had any farther commands, they should hear from you.

Puff. Usurers as they are, I must comply---the necessity of the times requires concession.---Tell them they shall be gratified.---I believe in my conscience they are all the sons of pawnbrokers and Jews.

Contract. By the way, Sir, that puff in the news-papers did not answer.---It was too glaring.---Twenty millions offered and refused! Credulity itself could not believe it.

Puff. Believe me, there is credulity enough in the city to credit almost any thing; but it was that rascally printer, who is in Newgate, that discovered the secret, by prefacing the puff with a paragraph of his own. 'Tis a d---d

D

thing

thing that some restraint cannot be put on this liberty of the press, as it is called.

Contract. It would be worse for your cause if it could; for in that case the *Scandalous Chronicle* would exist no longer; and then what would become of the tenure by which certain gentlemen hold their places,---the abuse of every character more exalted than their own?

Puff. True, *Contract*, true; I believe we must e'en let matters go on as they are, till we can carry some other points, and revive the glorious days of IMPRIMATUR. Heaven grant I may live to see the time when no one shall be permitted to print abuse but ourselves.

Contract. In the mean time, Sir, continue to borrow, from twelve to twenty *per cent.*--- Things will last as long as we live, and posterity may shift.

Puff. Aye, aye, by all means.---What have we to do with the unborn? Good morning t'ye.

Contract. Good morning to your worship.

ACT

A C T II.

SCENE I. St. *James's-Street*.

Sneer, Orator, *and* Rattle.

Sneer. WELL, my dear friend Rattle, and how went matters at Hackney?

Rattle. Nobly, my patriot.

Sneer. Did you speak at the meeting?

Rattle. Not a word---I reserved my eloquence for a future occasion.

Orator. I thought you would have *pledged* yourself to the company.

Rattle. Nay, now, Orator, I am ashamed of your using that phrase; you have borrowed it from the author of ANTICIPATION; and you, of all men, need not borrow---you have tropes and figures enough of your own.

Sneer. A truce, a truce, gentlemen:---you are both wits, and both patriots; friends I am sure you are; for every friend to his country must be a friend to all men of similar sentiments.---Let us proceed to business.---I was asking Mr. Rattle how matters went at Hackney-----

Rattle. Nobly, I told you.---No opposition was made. Mr. Bolus, of Oxford-street, indeed, objected, not to the plan itself, but to

the impossibility of carrying it into execution. He said that the present — was composed of such a set of rascals, that it would be idle to think of petitioning them:---if we meant to do any good, we must *act*, not *talk*; or words to that effect.

Sneer. By the way, Rattle, that fellow is no fool, though he is somewhat too hot-headed. He has read history, and remembers it: he knows that the tyrant JOHN was compelled to sign the CHARTER of BRITISH FREEDOM; and perhaps what Bolus advises at present, may be necessary in future.

Orator. I think and hope otherwise, gentlemen; for if I am not greatly mistaken, I have devised a plan which shall set all matters right, without having recourse to violent measures. I mean to curb and restrain the enormous influence of the crown; to abolish all sinecures; in a word, to lop off all the useless branches from the tree; and while I give more real power to the sovereign, to establish the freedom of the people on a firmer basis.

Rattle. That would be a glorious plan, but how is it to be accomplished?

Orator. That you shall hear at a proper time, and in another place. I have prepared five bills; and if we can but muster a majority, and get them passed, I am vain enough to think that the end of all the petitions will be answered at once.

Sneer. Then we shall lose our share in the glorious contest.

Orator.

Orator. By no means.---I will propose them; you shall second them; and both you and Rattle shall talk till you are exhausted, and then the devil's in't if we don't plague Boreas; and, in the end, rout the present set of banditti.

Sneer. I hope, Sir, that you do not consider the routing the present set of wretches as the greatest object of our wishes, as our *ultimatum*?

Orator. I do not, upon my honour, Sir; I have a better opinion of the wishes of our party, than to think that places and pensions are their objects: I have a nobler conception of their virtue. Besides, my bills will prove that not the acquisition, but the abolition, of enormous power, is my object.

Sneer. Nobly spoken!--I'll be d-----d if the acquisition of power, or of money, be any object with me; though of the latter few people are more in want---

Rattle. As half the Jews of Duke's-Place can testify---

Sneer. Nay, no reflections, Mr. Rattle. It is true that I have not scrupled to gamble away a fortune in a night: but have I not been equally ready to attend business all the following day, and even the succeeding night, when it has been necessary, to vote supplies for the good of my country?

Rattle. No one, Sir, doubts your readiness either to game away the money you borrow, or to vote away that which is not your own; except indeed you thought you could gratify the minister

minister by voting, and then you would oppose for the mere sake of opposition.

Sneer. Is this fair, Mr. Rattle? Have I not supported many a motion of your making, when common sense and sound policy equally reprobated the motion?

Orator. I beseech you, gentlemen, no alterations: we are engaged in a great, important, national concern: the fate of this mighty empire, in which may be eventually involved that of half Europe, appears to me to depend on the reception of my bills. If we can reduce the exorbitant influence of the crown, every wish of our hearts will be effected; but no more on this subject till we meet in Great Queen-street; the friends of freedom will be there, and something essential may be determined on for the good of the commonwealth:---but I wish *Sawbridge* would come more frequently among us; he is an Oliverian of the genuine stamp.

Rattle. Of the first impression, undoubtedly;---but you do not mean an insinuation to his preju---

Orator. Nothing could be farther from my thoughts. There is not a man of greater, of more unfulfilled honour in the universe.

Sneer. No more of this idle debate, gentlemen. I shall meet you at the proper time and place. Adieu.

Rattle, } In the evening, Sir,---you'll not
Orator. } fail us.

Sneer. By no means.---And when we meet
we

we shall determine on our future operations:
we then shall agree who shall be the foremost

“ To bellow out for Rome, and for his
“ country,
“ And mouthe at Cæsar till he shakes the
“ senate.”

Orator. You, Charles, shall perform the
mouthing part; while I, in gentler accents,
in milder strains, grace the debate with all the
flowers of the most persuasive rhetoric.

Rattle. But I'll mouthe too---You know
something of the strength of my lungs.

Orator. Agreed---agreed.---Let us all exert
ourselves, according to our abilities, for the
public good, and doubt not of success.

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

SCENE II. *Downing-Street.*

Puff, solus.

Sure never was unhappy wretch involved in
such a dilemma as I am!---The commands of
Wiskeranos on one side, and the conduct of the
patriots on the other, will drive me to distrac-
tion.---What the devil shall I do with these
petitioners?---Absolutely to reject their prayers
will cause an uproar that may end in blood-
shed; and what man can say whose blood will
be first spilled?---Perhaps I may be the first
victim, as I am certainly the *ostensible* offender.
---I must oppose artifice to what they call pa-
triotism,

triotism, and endeavour to accomplish, by shifting my ground, by petty tricks and subterfuges, what I shall never be able to do by open resistance and manly behaviour: but persons in my situation must not so much consider what is *honest*, as what is *convenient*.---The supplies must be raised:---the heads must be numbered, and I hope that between the public lottery, and the private brewery, the wine, the brandy, the malt, the salt, and the newspapers-----

Enter a Servant.

Servant. The editor of the Morning Post desires the honour of a moment's conference with your-----

Puff. D----- that fellow, how troublesome he is! Why does not he apply to Sir Walter Raleigh, his more immediate employer? Tell him I will not see him.---What is it to me whether the contents of the last paper were true or false?

Servant. I beg your pardon, Sir, but he hinted to me that he *would* be heard; and that-----

Puff. D----- his threats---I have more formidable rivals to fear, though I know he carries pistols.---I expect the noisy seaman, who objects to every thing, to insult me in the house. I shall be told that the navy is ill manned and worse paid; that---the---no matter---tell the fellow I will not see him.

[*Exit Servant.*

---'Tis

---'Tis a d-----d thing that a man can't speak à *soliloquy* ALONE. If Cato had been thus interrupted, he would not have died so decently as he does in the Tragedy.---What was I saying?---The wine, the brandy, the malt, the salt, and the news-papers.---No---no---that tax on the news-papers I am afraid will never do.---Sixpence on each advertisement---What will this produce?---Nine thousand a year---a petty object indeed, and scarcely worthy the consideration of a city contractor!---I must endeavour to think of something else in the lieu of it, for it has an appearance of striking at the liberty of the press, which will be particularly disgustful at this time.---I must not insult the people in the very moment that I wish to pick their pockets.---I have been repeatedly advised to lay an additional tax on cards and dice; and indeed there is great reason to suppose, that this would produce a very considerable sum: but these are the diversions of the great; and I must not tax those, who, possessing too much already, think they can never have enough.---People who can sit down to risk a patrimonial estate at a game of chance, may be easily purchased when fortune has decided against them.---At any rate I will proceed for another season in the old mode of taxation.---I will oppress the middling and lower ranks of people.---If I keep them poor, I shall keep them submissive:---nothing humbles a man so much as starving.---But I wish this Sir Walter would come---What the devil can keep
E him

him so long?---But he is not punctual in any appointment except those he makes with whores and fiddlers.---By the way, he is a more unprincipled varlet than myself, and that's a bold kind of an assertion.-----

Enter a Servant.

Servant. Sir Walter Raleigh, Sir-----

Puff. Admit him immediately-----

Enter Raleigh.

Oh! my dear Sir Walter, I am infinitely obliged to you for this new instance of your punctuality.---No man keeps his time like you.

Raleigh. You are disposed to be merry at my expence-----

Puff. Upon my honour I am not---punctuality is the life and soul of business, and you are the most punctual, most-----

Raleigh. Pshaw, Mr. Puff, you are joking. ---I am an hour too late---I was obliged to be at the King's-Head in Holborn, with my Huntingdonshire friends.---By the way, I fancy we shall carry the next election for that county.

Puff. Aye, and for more than half the counties and boroughs in the kingdom, or the game will be up with us.

Raleigh. Apropos;---do you mean to *dis-*
solve, at the end of this session, or-----

Puff.

Puff. You know that was the intention ; but the rascally patriots, having better intelligence than usual, have discovered this secret, and forwarded the news to their incendiary printers, who have alarmed the whole kingdom, so that people are already advertizing. Even Mr. Sneer has the insolence to offer himself for Westminster ; by the way, he might have had the manners to have asked my consent——

Raleigh. He would sooner cut your throat. *Entre nous*, I am damnably afraid that Charles is about to take up and be honest.

Puff. No---no---it is all pretence ; but I must come to his price——

Raleigh. I'm afraid you can't---he despises money ; besides, he has made a connection with Rattle and the Orator, and I am violently suspicious that they are both honest ; in which case their party will ultimately prevail---you and I must retire to private stations, and nourish the pangs of remorse.

Puff. You indeed have enough to repent of ; ---but I am not yet so far gone in iniquity ;---I would now retire with pleasure, if Wiske-ranos would permit me ; but his obstinacy is equal to his ignorance ; and though he knows I have never been able to do him one essential service, he still retains me as the best servant, the most accomplished money-monger in the universe.

Raleigh. Nor is he much out in his judgment respecting money-matters ; for you have raised him enormous sums, in cases where no-

thing but meer impudence on your part, and absolute submission on that of the givers, could have gained a shilling.

Puff. You and I won't dispute about impudence, Sir Walter; for I fancy that, if MODESTY was the umpire, the palm of victory would be given to both.

Raleigh. You mean that it would be divided——

Puff. Well, well---no matter---we are a couple of d-----d rascals; but it is our business to impress the public with a different opinion.

Raleigh. True; but this is nothing to business, ---I have good information, that the Orator, and Sneer, and Rattle, are to have a meeting this evening, and I will endeavour to have a spy on their conduct, and inform you of the particulars.

Puff. No one can doubt your industry in procuring or revealing secrets---but adieu---I must attend Wiskeranos on business of importance.---You will be in the upper house tomorrow---for I expect there will be warm work.

Raleigh. I will not fail.---Farewell dear brother in iniquity.

SCENE III. *Great Queen-Street.*

Sneer, Orator, Rattle.

Rattle. By heavens I am half afraid.---The sheriffs of some of the counties have refused
to

to call meetings at the requisition of the freeholders.

Sneer. O, no matter; we have a remedy for that.---In whatever case the sheriff refuses to call the county, our partizans shall summon the freeholders.---These sheriffs *dare not* refuse us the use of our own halls;---the county-hall is equally the property of every freeholder.

Orator. Allowed; but I wish the knowledge of this circumstance be not productive of consequences unfavourable to our cause:---if the people should be riotous-----

Rattle. What then? Let them riot.---You know the observation of George the Second---
 “ I love a mob (said that venerable old king)
 “ it was a mob that placed the house of Ha-
 “ nover on the throne.”

Sneer, } May that family possess it for
Orator. } ages!

Rattle. Amen, with all my heart! Those who are called the king's friends are his worst enemies; and we, whom the courtiers call his enemies, are his best friends. This is a truth which was well understood in the last reign.

Orator. And may be in the next-----

Sneer. Very possibly---but this is no part of our present business.---We meet to settle our mode of proceeding in the house. You, Mr. Orator, are to propose the bills---I am to second them, and Rattle is to say what he please on the occasion: he is, in his own words, to give a proof of the strength of his lungs.

Rattle, Aye;---and I'll *pledge* myself to---

Orator.

Orator. I knew, Charles, that he would be for *pledging* himself. He was angry when I used that word at our last meeting.

Rattle. Well, well, no matter.---Every man has his foible, and perhaps that may be mine : ---However, our plan is fixed, and much may depend on our unanimity-----

Orator. You'll be early, Mr. Sneer-----

Sneer. When did I fail of attendance?---Did I not lately tell the inhabitants of Westminster, that they might take the word of a man who had not failed of his duty for twenty years.

Rattle. Nor ever faithfully performed it during all that period.

Sneer. No reflections, Mr. Rattle.---Have you read *Paradise Regained*, or the History of Adam and the Fox?

Rattle. Yes---and I know how four the grapes were.

Orator. Pshaw, gentlemen---no more of this.---You affect wit and repartee, when common sense and good manners would be abundantly more agreeable. I trust we mean well ---let us not hurt the common cause by ridiculous wranglings.

Sneer. I trust it will be an *uncommon* cause, or our country freeholders will fail us.---But adieu to this nonsense. [Exeunt omnes.

SCENE

SCENE IV. *Lincoln's-Inn-Fields.**Sir Christopher Hatton, solus.*

If I hear any thing said to-morrow that may but tend to reflect on my conduct or principles, I will tell the story of my transactions with the sleeping boy in the blue ribbon; represent the injustice of keeping from a seat on the bench, a man who has more wisdom, learning, and knowledge, than any one of his profession.---What though I have taken a double fee, and refused to speak for it, yet my hands are clean: ---What though I have accepted a sinecure, yet I have merited it by my former services: and I think the least reward that can be bestowed on me, will be the possession of four or five places, which all the world must acknowledge I do not *deserve*.---I will have place, pension, title, and preferment; or---but I will instantly hasten to Downing-street, and make my proposals to Mr. Puff.---I will have a witness, and I hope to find him without one, in which case I shall have that sort of advantage which every lawyer wishes to take.---No matter how I have *acquired a fortune*, I am determined to BUILD *a FAMILY*.

A C T

A C T III.

SCENE I. *A Garden on the Banks
of the Thames.*

Wiskeranos, Puff, *Sir* Walter Raleigh, Dangle.

Raleigh. A FINE evening, Sir---a lovely moon.---I have been thinking, that if admiral *Lee-shore* had met his opponent on such a night as this, and had entertained the least idea of fighting, we should have had just occasion for illuminations.

Wisk. But to your great grief, Raleigh;---for he was of my appointing---

Raleigh. I beg your pardon, Sir; whoever you appoint must be agreeable to my wishes; and, in every event, must meet my fullest approbation.

Puff. Now I know that to be an infamous falsehood, Sir Walter---for if your wishes could have been gratified, not Mr. *Lee-shore*, but Sir Hugh had been first in command:---in that case no disobedience of orders had followed, and the *wretched printer*, as he is called, would not have had a whole year to languish in Newgate, for no crime real or imaginary.

Raleigh. Pshaw---that fellow is a fool---

Puff.

Puff. Granted---but the sacred security of Magna Charta should not have been violated in his person.---No man ought to be deprived of his liberty, but by the judgment of his peers; yet the liberty of this man was so taken away: but, however, we have blundered in this business as in every thing else; and established the fellow's paper, and made his fortune, by the very plan which we intended as his ruin.

Dangle. All this appears to me to be horrid nonsense.---I thought the purpose of our meeting was to fix our mode of proceeding for the ensuing day.

Wisk. I thought so too---but I own I can't conceive how a plan can be fixed, before we know what efforts will be made by the opposing party.---So let us adjourn, as usual, without coming to any resolution.

Raleigh. That fellow's head grows more and more impenetrable.--- [Aside to Puff.]

Puff. So much the better for us.---[Aside.] Gentlemen, I second the motion for adjournment.

Dangle. Then we agree, as usual, to have met to do nothing, and that when we meet again we will finish the business. [Exeunt.]

SCENE II. *St. Stephen's-Hall.*

Sir Christopher Hatton, Orator, Sneer, Dangle, Puff, Rattle, Bully, Petitioner, and others.

Orator. I rise to make a motion to retrench the expenditure of the public money, because
F I am

I am convinced, that when nothing is left to the public, very little can be shared by individuals. I am declining apace into the vale of years; and for that reason I wish for that happiness to my country of which I can never partake. Never having had any fortune of my own, I am ambitious that others should at least preserve the little property they now possess, without farther invasion from the hand of power. This I trust will be deemed true patriotism;---I shall therefore move, that leave be given to bring in a ———

Sneer. And I second the motion———

Petitioner. What! before you know what it is? ———

Rattle. All is one for that.---We are already agreed what shall be done, as far as it is in our power to do it.

Petitioner. Why this is more absurd than the proceedings of my eighty-five societies in the North.

Puff. Then it is very absurd indeed. [*Aside.*

Orator. Gentlemen, I claim a right to proceed without interruption.---It is the custom in all the disputing societies; at least it was so when I was a member of the Robin-Hood, that every man should be allowed to talk his five minutes, and even half as much longer if the president did not turn up his glass.

Hatton. Nay, Sir, talk on; I shall not turn up the glass till I am tired of hearing you, and that I believe will not be soon; for I begin to veer about into the wake of patriotism.

Orator.

Orator. In few words, my proposals are, that no man shall be paid for business which he does not transact---that no one shall receive a large stipend for business that may equally well be done by others in office, without additional expence:---that our master shall not pay cooks who are incapable of dressing, or unwilling to dress, his dinner; for it is a shame that these cooks should wear laced cloaths, and sit in the upper pews at church, when their master thinks they are turning the spit.---Our worthy superior has many servants who do little, and many more who do nothing, for what they receive. Permit me to give one instance of the mismanagement of his affairs.---He has three clerks to transact that business which could be, and has been, equally well managed by two.---My first proposal therefore is, that one of these clerks shall be turned out of his office, and his business be transacted by the other two.

Dangle. Don't level your darts at me, Mr. Orator.

Orator. No man can be afraid of you, Sir.-----

Hatton. Shall this man be kept in office?

Company. Yes---he is of no use, and therefore retain him.

Orator. My next proposal is, that seven or eight fellows, who know nothing of trade, shall not be allowed to have the management of it.

Hatton. What say you to this proposal, gentlemen?

Company. By all means agree to it.---Turn 'em out.---*Una voce.*

Orator. My next proposition is, that one who is employed to audit accounts in a certain office, should not have more than ten thousand pounds annually, for a business that does not cost him ten days labour in a year; "his kitchen is stored with luxuries, while I am fasting, and straining my nerves for the public good." I would propose too, that his underlings, his tellers as they are called, should not be paid above fifteen hundred a year for counting that money which they never see. But let not gentlemen in present possession be alarmed---let them fatten on the public for life---nor would I wish an abolition of their places.---Let it still remain in the power of our master to reward his faithful servants.

Hatton. What is your opinion of this proposition?

Company. We must defer the consideration of it to a future day.

Orator. I have many other plans of reformation to propose.---I would have those who execute public justice, well and punctually paid.---Those who go abroad on our errands must not lose their labour.---Let the tradesmen who work for our master be well paid, and their children nobly supported;---and let all his servants of every denomination, be considered in proportion to their merit, for "the labourer is worthy of his hire."

Puff.

Puff. I am convinced of the importance of the plan proposed by Mr. Orator, and I will forward it to the utmost of my power---by laying every obstruction in its way.

Hatton. Is it your pleasure that ———

Petitioner. Hold a moment, I beseech you, Sir. ---If you will give me leave, I will overturn, in half an hour, all that Mr. Orator has been saying in *three hours and forty minutes*.---I will be exact to time, my watch is a good one.---I bought it of one of the members of my eighty-five societies at Glasgow.

Sneer. I wish it was a *stop* watch.

Rattle. It will stop of itself.---He who talks loud cannot be heard when every one present talks louder.

[*A general noise through the hall, so that Mr. Petitioner could not be heard; but it was observed, by the motion of his lips, that he continued talking till he had finished what he called a speech.*]

Hatton. Is it your pleasure that we adjourn this meeting?

Company. This meeting is adjourned till tomorrow morning, &c. [Exeunt omnes.]

SCENE III. *Palace-Yard.*

Sneer, Rattle, Orator.

Orator. Well, gentlemen, what think you of the probability of success?

Rattle.

Rattle. I have no doubt of it.

Sneer. You are too sanguine, Tom.---Our plan, I doubt, will be opposed in another place, and all our noble schemes of public reformation *negatived without a division.*

Orator. We shall at least have the consolation of reflecting, that we have attempted to discharge our duty; we have laboured in the public cause, and, if things should not thrive in our hands, we shall have nothing wherewith to accuse ourselves, and may say, with a great man, on another occasion, *fiat justitia, ruat cælum.*

Rattle. By the way, Ned, the man you allude to may be great, and I own he is so, in more ways than one:---but I'll be d-----d if he's honest.

Orator. That's another consideration.---Perhaps if he had been honest, he had not held his present post for such a number of years.---You know that a certain gentleman of our acquaintance is not remarkably nice in the choice of his servants.

Sneer. As Dangle, and Raleigh, and Puff, can testify.

Rattle. And we know where he might chuse better---but he is not fond of the Fitzroys, the Holles's, the Bentincks, the Cavendishes, and all the other great names of those who have distinguished themselves as the friends of his family.

Sneer. Ingratitude is worse than the sin of witchcraft.

Orator.

Orator. We have met here, not to reflect on particular characters, but to consult on the general welfare.

Rattle. If us three, and half a dozen more, should not be able to stir up such a spirit as may induce the people to assert their own rights, all will be lost.

Sneer. All will be lost indeed! and the rascals of Duke's-Place may share the poor pittance of my fortune among them.

Rattle. A poor pittance truly!---But seriously, Charles, dost thou think, that if the present contest had been out of the question, the Jews would have had a shilling less?

Sneer. I did not even intimate as much---I only mean, that if the contest should issue favourably, I may possibly have less occasion to apply to the scoundrels in future.

Rattle. Thou shalt be **TREASURER**, Charles.

Sneer. I despise the idea---I could never keep a shilling of my own money two days together, and I will not undertake to be a banker to the public.---Even Puff, with all his faults, is more fit for such an office than myself; for he sleeps too many of the four and twenty hours to have leisure to spend his own money, much less that of others.

Orator. I do not know that he spends it, but he gives it away in a mode of wanton extravagance, which seems to intimate, that he knows not any thing of its real value.

Rattle. And yet he is said to be an excellent accomptant.

Sneer.

Sneer. A mere arithmetician is a mere block-head.---Shew me a fellow that is ready at accounts, and I will shew you either a dunce or a rogue, and very possibly both.

Rattle. Then thou art neither, Charles;---a fair conclusion in thine own favour.---Thou knowest no more of accounts, than receiving of money, and spending it; nor hast any idea of a sum total, till the last shilling in thy pocket reminds thee of the first great rule, ADDITION.

Orator. Pshaw, gentlemen, this is no part of our present business.---Are the deputies of the several committees of association arrived in town, and what says the opulent and venerable priest of Yorkshire?

Sneer. They are come---the place of appointment is fixed, and if we are not too hard for Mr. Puff---then the old maxim will be inverted, and the *vox populi* will not be the *vox Dei*.

Rattle. By the way I can tell you an important piece of news.---Mr. Puff is to be attacked in the HALL by Sir Christopher Hatton; and the business will come on within an hour.

Sneer. Allons!---Let us go thither immediately-----

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE

SCENE IV. *St. Stephen's-Hall.*

Dangle, Sneer, Puff, Hatton, Rattle, Orator,
Jolly Dick, *and the rest of the Gang.*

Hatton. Since I am provoked to it, I must tell the company that Mr. Puff has used me ill.—Every man knows that I am the first genius in my line of life. I am not only the most learned, but the most honest man in the kingdom; and I think, that when it is becoming fashionable to abolish sinecures, I ought to hold three or four places, while I find myself incapable of doing the duty of one.—I made a bargain with Mr. Puff for the purchase of an office.

Puff. I remember nothing of the matter.

Rattle. Mr. Puff is very apt to forget his promises——

Jolly Dick. I carried the message to Sir Christopher:—but I have nothing to say against Mr. Puff, for I believe the promise was made by his predecessor——

Orator. It is immaterial whether Mr. Puff made a promise or not—we all know what his promises mean——

Sneer. Aye, aye, they mean nothing——

G

Duellist.

Duellist. What nonsense is all this!—A man in the upper house has abused my character, and I'll cut his throat in Hyde-Park.

Omnes. This is nothing to the present company——

Duellist. I don't care, I'll cut his throat—

SCENE V. *Hyde-Park.*

Enter Duellist, Paddy, and their Seconds.

Seconds. Let us measure the ground—twelve paces——

Duellist. Fire, Sir——

Paddy. If I do I'll be d——d.

Seconds. Paddy is wounded——

Duellist. Fire again, Sir.

Paddy. I cannot think of firing at you under these circumstances.

Seconds. He has fired his pistol in the air.——

A Spectator. And this is the issue of modern debate.—People fall out they know not why, and fight they know not wherefore; they quarrel about that honour to which they are strangers, commit murder from a false sense of honour, and appeal to HEAVEN for the decision of disputes in which HELL only could interfere with propriety.—Yet is this called honour.—If it be so, I have no conception of the
the

T H E C R I T I C. 43

the meaning of the word :—but, whatever be the fate of the other actors in the **TRAGIC FARCE** of the day, conscience tells me, that **Duellists** will hereafter meet with a **SEVERER MONITOR** than the **CRITIC** !

T H E E N D.

THE CRITIC

the meaning of the word:—but, whatever be
the fate of the other actors in the TRAGIC
FACON of the day, conscience tells me, that
Duchess will hereafter meet with a severer
Monitor than the Critic!



THE END

